

SJO/AT

5th January 2021

Dear Parent / Carer,

I wrote to you last week following the Government's announcement just before the New Year about when pupils would return to school this term.

I am sorry to be writing to you again so soon on this subject. However, as you may have seen, the Prime Minister has announced a new national lockdown because of rising infection rates of Covid-19 and to try to prevent the further spread of the virus.

As part of this, all primary schools, secondary schools and colleges in England are to be partially closed from today until at least the end of half term in February, except for children of critical workers or vulnerable children. Early years settings remain open.

The Prime Minister also announced that "not all exams" would go ahead as normal this year and that there would be "alternative arrangements". He said the Government would set out further details on this at a later date, and when that information is announced, we will update parents of students due to take exams this year. However, **the vocational examinations that were planned for this week will still go ahead.**

From today:

If you or your partner is a critical worker, or if your child is classed as vulnerable, then the school will remain open, as now, and we look forward to seeing them in school as normal for teaching and learning.

As you know, we have worked incredibly hard since the start of the pandemic in March to keep our school as safe as possible, and I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the safety measures in place at our school:

- All students and staff must wear a face covering in communal areas, unless exempt
- Everyone is expected to remain in their allocated year group community.
- Students are encouraged to follow good hand hygiene by washing their hands regularly throughout the day or using the hand sanitiser provided.

Please note we are trying to work with windows open in classrooms for ventilation. As the cold days have returned, and with the need for ventilation in mind, students may need a few more layers of clothing.

School buses will run as normal.

For all other students, our school is closed until at least the end of the February half-term. High-quality remote learning will be provided to make sure they continue to receive a consistent education. We know that this places pressure on you at a difficult time but your support in helping your child engage with the remote learning as much as possible is so important and we are very grateful for it. Students can access work through Google Classroom and ClassCharts. There will be some pre-recorded teaching by teachers at least once per week for every subject. Students will receive feedback on their work at least once per week.

Together; we care, we challenge, we excel

I am aware that live streaming of lessons is preferred by some parents. This is extremely difficult for us for the following reasons:

1. The infrastructure of the school and its broadband connection cannot host the number of lessons that would be needed.
2. Many students are not able to access hardware at home when parents working from home need it, and so the live lessons would be missed.
3. Many parents inform us that their home broadband cannot cope with live streaming.
4. The classes are far too big to host interactive teaching. Most Google Meet meetings are not successful when more than 20 people are present.

We intend to continue with the lateral flow testing when we have had opportunity to set this up and train our staff. We anticipate that students can receive the tests from early next week. Testing is for students on site only. It is not compulsory and consent must be given. I will be sending a consent form home as soon as possible along with further information.

We will continue to stay in touch with you on this matter, and about your child's education. However, if you have any questions, or if you require any support relating to these new arrangements, please email office@tavistockcollege.org.

I would once again like to take this opportunity to thank you wholeheartedly for your understanding and ongoing support in helping us to manage this unprecedented situation. Please continue to take care and to stay safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Jones', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sarah Jones
Principal